



GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

JUNE 2012 VOLUME 3 ISSUE 6

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Tax relief reduced for the poor



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

This time of year, low income families have a little breathing room thanks to their recently-received tax refunds. They can buy shoes for the family, pay off loans they have taken out to make rent or car repairs, or perhaps make a down payment on a car or better apartment. Some can even put a bit aside for the inevitable rainy day.

Next year those families will not be so fortunate. These tax refunds come largely courtesy of the Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC), one from the federal government and one from the state of Michigan. The Michigan EITC has been reduced significantly starting this year.

Recipients of the EITC will pay an average \$307 more in taxes as a re-

sult of the state reductions, according to a report released Monday by the Michigan League for Human Services. The League noted that those credits kept 14,000 children from falling into poverty.

"That's money that would otherwise have gone to small businesses across the state that serve the needs of working families, particularly in rural Michigan communities and inner cities," said Gilda Jacobs, president and CEO of the league.

Beginning this year, the size of the EITC that Michigan residents can claim on their state income taxes dropped from 20 percent of their federal EITC to 6 percent. For the 2nd District in Detroit, the average recipient will pay

\$420 more in taxes, reducing the average received to only \$180.

Reducing the EITC is only the latest of the many hits taken by the poor this year. Many abruptly lost cash assistance because they had already received four years of cash benefits, of any amount, at any time during their adulthood. More lost their SNAP benefits (food stamps) because they had received them for "too many" consecutive years.

People's needs don't vanish; they are met in different ways. Many will turn to private assistance such as food pantries, which are already seeing record numbers of patrons. With the elimination of the Michigan tax credit, which included donations to food pantries, they will be hard-pressed to meet additional need.

Some people get desperate and end up in jail, whether for theft or for disorderly conduct when they use alcohol or drugs to escape the daily defeats and pain at the loss of their cars, homes or families.

At Groundcover, we believe the dignity of working to support oneself is crucial for a healthy life. In today's economy, jobs are scarce and too many do not pay a living wage. Many employers only offer part-time employment to avoid paying benefits. We all reap the rewards of this system in lower prices for our fast food and goods purchased at chain stores. The EITC is a mechanism for returning some of that largesse to the people from whom it was taken and making work pay for them. Shame on us for taking that away, too.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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Better values for self and community

Dear Editor,

The social values recently brought into vogue by Ronald Reagan and his latter-day clones have been a disastrous detour from the communitarian traditional values America was founded upon.

These new "industrial" values celebrate personal achievement and wealth. The older values of empathy, cooperation and mutual concern are either mocked or ignored. How much crumbling infrastructure will be needed to balance our state budget? How many local people will be hungry, sick or homeless because of "conservative" revenue priorities? This type of systemic inequality must be redressed soon to assure a better future for us all!

Sincerely,
Paul Lambert

June Calendar

June 2 – African American Downtown Festival. 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Crafts, merchandise, food; musical, theatrical, and dance performances and kids' activities. N. Fourth Ave. and Ann St.

June 3 – Taste of Ann Arbor. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Live music and kids activities. Tastes of local food and drink offerings in exchange for tickets purchased on site. Main St. in Ann Arbor between William and Washington.

June 8 – Green Festival. 6-9 p.m. Main St., downtown Ann Arbor.

June 10 – Grillin': Food Gatherers annual barbecue benefit. 3-8 p.m. Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor Saline Rd. Tickets \$50 in advance, \$60 at the door. (See ad p. 12)

June 10-15 – Restaurant Week. Downtown Ann Arbor restaurants offer fixed-price lunches and dinners.

June 15 – Ann Arbor Summer Festival: Top of the Park kick-off. 5 p.m. - midnight. Live music and food. Ingalls Mall between Washington and N. University in Ann Arbor.

June 15 – Summer Music Series in Downtown Dexter. 6:30-9:30 p.m. Dexter Community Orchestra starts off this series of varied Friday night music offerings.

June 21 – RAAH Annual Meeting. Congregations' efforts to address the need for affordable housing in Washtenaw County. Refreshments 6:30 p.m., program 7-8 p.m. 2240 E. Stadium in Ann Arbor. (See ad on p. 10)

What's in a word?



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell
Pastor, Bethlehem United Church of Christ

I love words. The daughter of two teaching parents, I was surrounded with words and books as a child in the 1950s and 1960s. Words with more than one meaning or words that can be both a noun and a verb are special treasures. Even the shortest word can carry considerable weight in the right circumstance. A few words have a vigorous attachment for me to someone or something in particular. Whenever I hear those words or read them on the page or screen, a person, time, or event comes alive again.

At the moment, in my writing and in my spiritual practice, the word that won't let me go is *vessel*. I am listening to three meanings of this multi-layered word. First of all, vessel can refer to a container. That sort of vessel might be

a cup or a bowl, or perhaps a kettle, bottle, or pitcher. Some vessels have one open side; others are capped or covered on that side. Such a vessel holds and protects what lies inside it. It puts limits on its contents. Over time, it is both filled up and emptied out. Our everyday lives are filled with this sort of vessel. Look around; you will see them.

Secondly, a vessel can be a tube or canal. Think of blood vessels, those arteries and veins pulsing with the movement of the fluid that keeps us alive. Similarly, a vascular plant has such tubes in its structure. No matter the temperature, it is always spring for me when the sap begins to flow again from the ground up through vessels in the sugar maples, promising a sweet out-of-season harvest when snow is still retreating. Those vessels both contain and make movement and flow possible. Unlike the first sort of vessel, they are alive with what they hold.

And finally, a vessel can be a boat. The dictionary tells us these vessels technically include any watercraft

bigger than a rowboat. I am not sure why rowboats, kayaks, canoes, and the like are excluded from this vessel category. Vessels of the third type resemble the first and second in that they contain, hold, keeps safe, and pour out their contents. They echo second vessels in the push and pull of movement within. But these third ones move beyond the set course of vessels inside a human or plant body. They are free to travel the width and breadth of any body of water where they are.

The layers of meaning in the word vessel build upon and expand out from each another. To stretch the word vessel metaphorically, I would say that Groundcover News is a vessel too. In the embrace of this paper, all our different lives, in some way, are held, contained, kept safe, and poured out. The paper provides the boundary of a structure in which we create together. As different sorts of people arrive and find a place in the Groundcover community, there is an ongoing flow of movement among us. Not unlike the arteries and veins in our bodies,

Groundcover News pulsates with our voices, our vision, our varied opinions, and our commitment to a different future. Groundcover might have begun its life as a rowboat not really in the vessel classification. Now it is surely a schooner of some size, always headed in the direction of a new horizon. There are horizons in our writing, horizons of fresh connection, horizons of lives transformed, and horizons of shifts in how we engage in common life in this county and across the state. The waters that Groundcover News is already crossing and those out there waiting are wide, indeed. All this we know when we pause to consider the continual growth in contributions, distribution, and readership.

Once more – I love words. Vessel happens to be my new word for Groundcover News. What is yours?



Bethlehem United Church of Christ
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(between William and Packard)

www.bethlehem-ucc.org (734) 665-6149

Bethlehem Church is home for the Groundcover Office

Sundays:

8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship

10:00 am ~ Church School

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Robert's difficult journey to Groundcover

Editor's note: Robert was one of the first Groundcover vendors. Last year he shared his passion for art with our readers. Now he shares his personal story.

Hi! I am Robert, Groundcover vendor number 17. I was born in Highland Park at the end of 1955 and grew up in Farmington Hills, where I graduated from high school in 1974.

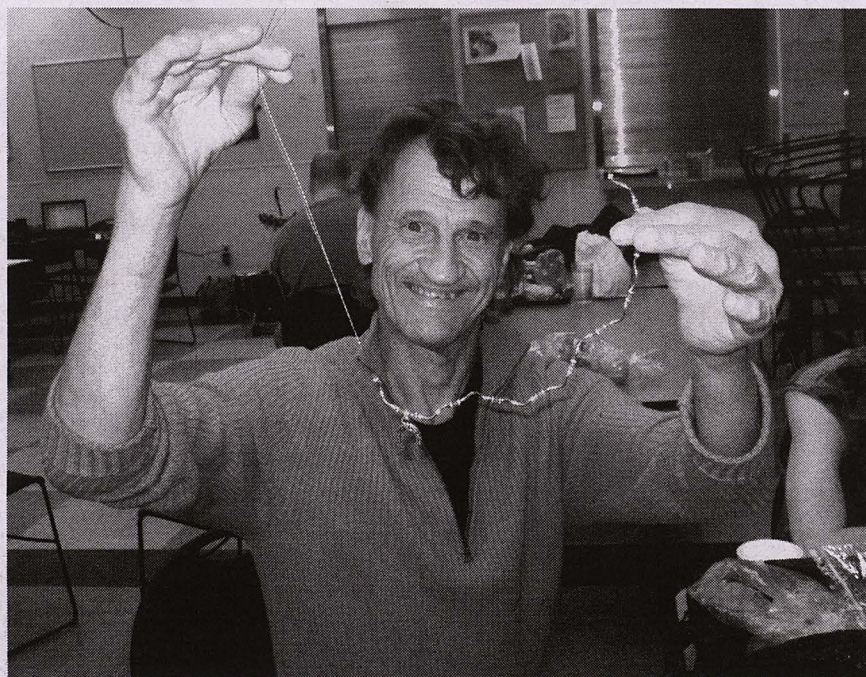
I went to Mott Community College in Flint and was living with my elder brother. I worked for the Flint Journal in distribution, but my car broke down, so I went back to my parents' home. I started working for the Observer and Eccentric News.

In 1976, I was in a car accident and suffered a closed-head injury and was sent to Botsford Hospital. I nearly died on the gurney but they were able to stop the bleeding.

After the accident, my parents told me repeatedly, "We are not going to be here much longer. You are going to have to make it on your own."

Though I knew I had to break my dependence on my parents, I was upset and angry. One day, my mother said, "Bob, the only way to get you the help you need is to send you to the state hospital."

My anger exploded and I threw my glass of water in her face and threatened to hurt her if she ever tried to send me to a state hospital. Nevertheless, I was sent to the Clinton Valley Center at Pontiac



Robert Salo shows off a piece of his hand-crafted jewelry.

State Hospital in 1977. I never told the doctors at Clinton Valley about the car accident.

I was elected president on each of my wards, some open and some closed. I was the longest-term president in the history of the Clinton Valley Center.

Patients were sometimes put in two-point restraints that you can walk in. They used four-point restraints in seclusion. Condemned patients were sent to isolation, a bullet-proof glass room with an entrance to underground catacombs. A patient sent to quarantine was never seen again.

When I was in a closed ward, a patient was being escorted down the corridor, surrounded by orderlies. I could hear

the chains dragging on the marble floor. They took him to seclusion, where he was strapped onto a bed in four-point restraints.

My friend came to my room at 4 in the morning and reported that the man had been given an injection and died in the restraints. My friend stole keys from an orderly that night and drove an ambulance to Ohio so he could leave and be with his grandmother.

I was moved to the Phoenix Center high-rise, an apartment program where my friend from the military shot his brains out with a 30-30. Another friend hanged himself after losing his apartment in a nearby state-run house. I was booted out for having a keg party. Afterwards, a girl who was a

friend of a friend jumped to her death, and still another was found dead on the sidewalk of her Phoenix Center apartment. The newspapers reported there was no wrongdoing. The people running the programs at the Phoenix knew that both of them were on medication. The management scurried out of there quick as could be.

I moved to Washtenaw County four years ago and ended up homeless. While living at the Delonis Center, I took a Greyhound to Detroit to see the Red Wings Stanley Cup Parade. I've never been to a Red Wings game but I've made it a point to be at all of their parades. Channel 4 covered the parade and all my friends at the shelter got to see me on television. For the first time, I got an autograph, too. Later, when I was living on the street, I was robbed and left hungry. Chris at the local pub exchanged the autograph for a burger.

An elderly friend from the shelter came with me to the parade. On the bus ride, she told me that her daughter was involved with a person using drugs and they took over her house, leaving her homeless. I heard that she passed away while living at the shelter.

Now I work with Groundcover. I've got three years' sobriety since living in Washtenaw County. Selling the newspaper, I say, "Share your views. Get the Groundcover News!"

I take each day as though it is a gift. Today is the gift – that is why we call it "the present!"

See below for my latest venture!

Cottage food industry regulations

by Robert Salo

I have been interested in starting my own business for some time, though I thought it would be selling my three-dimensional artwork. Through J-PORT (the Justice Project Outreach Team), I learned of a class at Washtenaw Community College that explained the new food laws and thought I would check it out and possibly start a smoothie business with the earning potential of \$75,000 per year. Here's what I learned.

The Cottage Food Law of Michigan took effect in July of 2010, and it provides the opportunity for a person to sell food products made in their single-family, primary domestic residence, provided that they can be made safely. Potentially hazardous

foods are listed in the food code and restricted to commercial kitchen preparation.

Regulations limit products to those that do not need to be temperature controlled, contain under 85 percent water, and have a pH below 4.6 or above 7.5. Meats, fish, eggs, dairy products, tofu, cooked vegetables, untreated garlic and oil mixtures, all beverages, and some plants such as raw sprouts do not qualify under these regulations.

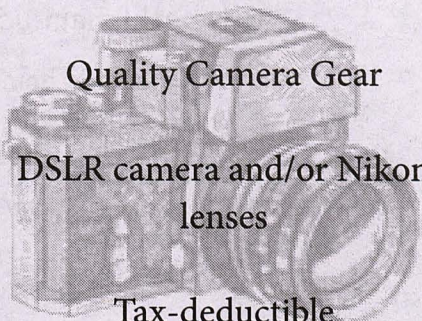
Bread and muffins, jam and jelly, dehydrated vegetables, coffee, hard candies, dehydrated soup mixes and spices are examples of acceptable food products that qualify under the Cottage Food Law. These products must be sold directly to the consumer, face-to-face.

The Cottage Food Law was enacted because it allows a person like me to start out producing products from my own unlicensed, domestic kitchen. If I follow the guidelines, I do not have to worry about food poisoning or botulism and I can earn a comfortable living in today's tough economy, though I am limited to a maximum of \$15,000 in annual earnings as a cottage industry.

Since beverages are excluded by the Cottage Food Law, I will have to follow other regulations for my smoothie business. I will make and sell them at the Farmer's Market, using fruits and vegetables purchased fresh at the market.

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St. Francis pledges financial support for supportive housing

by James Varani
Member, St. Francis Peace & Justice Committee

What can I, as an individual, do to help homeless people in our area? What can we, as a congregation, do to help end homelessness in the area?

These questions led about 80 people to attend a gathering at St. Francis of Assisi parish in Ann Arbor one evening in April. Speakers represented five organizations: The Delonis Center, Avalon Housing, Camp Take Notice, the VA Homeless Program, and the Washtenaw Housing Alliance. They described their organization's role in the community response to homelessness. Most importantly, the speakers provided information on what volunteers could do to help their organizations. Each of these organizations works with different segments of the homeless population; each has different volunteer needs. The event was sponsored by the Peace and Justice Committee at St. Francis of Assisi. Many in attendance were from St. Francis parish, but multiple different area congregations were represented, as well as groups such as Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department. The art work of local artists Susan Clinthorne and Sally Theisen was displayed. The pieces were part of their "Letters Home" exhibit, which is focused on "giving the homeless a voice."

The five speakers provided a framework for the evening's program, but some of the most interesting discussion occurred during the question and answer period that followed. Individuals who live at Camp Take Notice and Avalon Housing commented on how those respective organizations have helped them.

At one point in the discussion, the issue of congregations committing to the support of one or more affordable housing units was raised. Fr. Jim McDougal, pastor of St. Francis parish, who was in the audience, stated that St. Francis would make such a commitment. This brought a round of applause from both the speakers and the audience. It was noted that St. Francis, which already participates in multiple programs to help homeless individuals and other needy community members, is considered to be a model congregation. Catholic Social Teaching is alive at St. Francis.

Those in the audience gained a better appreciation for what some community

groups do in the fight against homelessness. Individuals left with handouts detailing specific volunteer opportunities with the represented groups. It was also noted that the group Religious Action for Affordable Housing (RAAH) will hold its annual meeting in the very same location on June 21st, from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. This will be an open meeting and anyone wishing to participate is welcome to attend. St. Francis has been a long-time supporter of this faith-based effort to bring more affordable housing to Washtenaw County.

Attendees learned about the work of the Delonis Center (named after former St. Francis parishioner, Bob Delonis), a shelter in downtown Ann Arbor. It has multiple programs for single adults without permanent housing. In addition to providing a place to sleep, the Delonis Center provides job counseling and help with substance abuse and medical/mental illness issues. Last year, over 1,000 individuals were helped in both the residential and day programs. Ellen Schulmeister, Executive Director of the Delonis Center, in her speech told those in attendance that Delonis has a variety of opportunities for volunteers. Regardless, however, of what else a volunteer may do at the Delonis Center, simply being present so that a client has someone to talk to is about the most important thing a volunteer can provide.

Avalon Housing is quite different from the Delonis Center. The non-profit housing corporation owns and manages housing for low-income individuals. Next to the city of Ann Arbor itself, Avalon Housing is the largest provider of low-income housing in the area. Over 200 units scattered throughout the Ann Arbor - Ypsilanti area are managed



Lotus Yu (above) from Camp Take Notice and Julie Steiner from the Washtenaw Housing Alliance help educate about homelessness.

by Avalon. Like the Delonis Center, Avalon Housing provides support for to its clients. One of the evening's speakers, Carole McCabe, noted that when an individual in Avalon Housing has some sort of difficulty, the goal is to work with that person so that she or he can remain housed - very different from the for-profit realty market. There are numerous volunteer opportunities

with Avalon Housing. In addition to office and clerical jobs, volunteers can help with gardening projects, tenant transportation, property maintenance, mentoring and

youth summer programs. Individuals with legal and professional skills are also always needed.

Camp Take Notice is a tent camp located just west of Ann Arbor. The camp provides a place to reside for individuals who might otherwise be "sleeping under a bridge." The camp is run by campers themselves who make and enforce the rules. Community involvement in the camp is headed by a group referred to as MISSION (Michigan Itinerant Shelter System - Interdependent Out of Necessity). The two individuals who spoke on behalf of MISSION and Camp Take Notice indicated that tents, blankets, propane and city bus tokens were always in need. Prepared meals - especially for Sunday evenings - were also welcome. With the truncated Sunday evening bus schedule, it can be hard for people living in Camp Take Notice to stay downtown long enough for dinner. Advocacy is also important. Legislation at the state level to make homeless gatherings such as Camp Take Notice

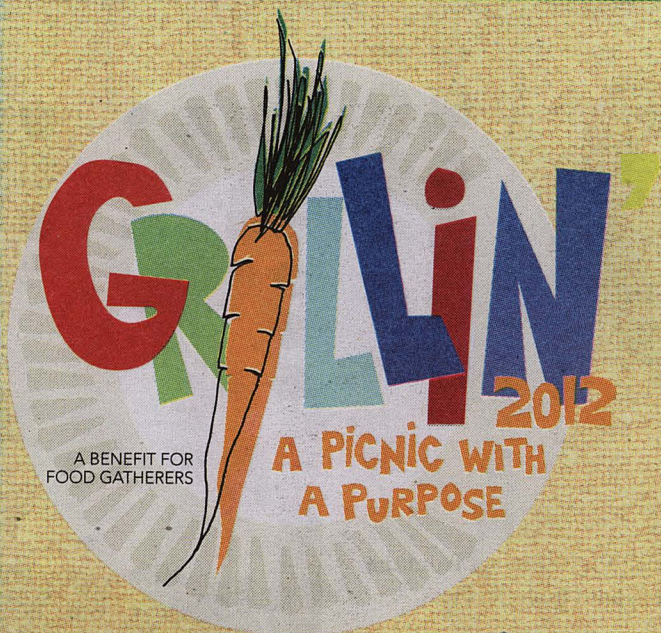


illegal has been discussed. Camp Take Notice has already moved twice in the past few years, looking for a stable place. Where campers would go if the camp closed permanently was not addressed at the meeting.

Following this, Shawn Dowling spoke on behalf of the VA Homeless Project. As is clear from the name, this is a Veterans Administration program to help homeless vets. The program tries to reach veterans throughout the entire state and northern Ohio. There are homeless veterans in every county, but in many places, such individuals tend to be "invisible." How does the VA Homeless Project help vets? Shawn looked at the other speakers and said that they worked with all of the organizations already discussed. Additionally, Shawn emphasized how the VA is going to the veterans, thus proving itself more available in addressing needs versus the old way of expecting veterans to get to them.

The evening's last formal speaker was Julie Steiner, representing the Washtenaw Housing Alliance. This is an umbrella organization that works to coordinate the efforts of 27 county groups that work to provide housing for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Providing a single telephone number, 734-961-1999, that can connect at-risk individuals to all of the services provided by the different organizations, and streamlining the grant application process for organizations seeking support for their activities, are two of the ways in which the Washtenaw Housing Alliance works to combat homelessness in the area.

A community celebration that fights hunger where we live



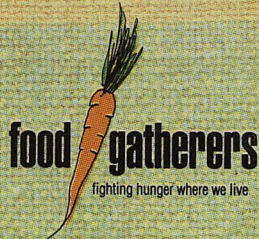
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by Clayton Williams



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Trucks draw families to school readiness fair



by Laurie Lounsbury
Groundcover
Contributor

It had the makings of a Dr. Seuss book: dump trucks, fire trucks, garbage trucks, too; cop cars, back hoes and a school bus or two.

It was the fourth annual Touch a Truck Day, sponsored by the Washtenaw County Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative. Over 4,000 people – including more than 1,500 children – attended the event designed to raise awareness about preschool programs available in Washtenaw County.

“We want people to know what services are available so that their kids are ready for success when they start school,” said Margy Long, Director of Success by 6.

Over 25 vehicles were parked at Briarwood Mall, available for kids to climb on and explore. While school buses might be boring to older kids who ride them every day, the preschool children were enamored with them.

“It’s big kid envy,” Long explained. “They see big kids getting on the buses every day and they want to see what they’re like.”

Forty community groups and organizations were on hand to connect with families and get the word out about their exciting programs and services.

“We want people to learn how important it is to have their kids prepared for school so they can succeed in school and in life,” Long explained. “According to one study, 47 percent of

children starting kindergarten aren’t prepared for that level of learning, and many of them never catch up.”

A High Scope study followed two groups of kids for decades – one group had been properly prepared for school; the other group hadn’t. The findings were astounding. Kids who got off on the right foot in school were more likely to graduate from high school, get jobs, have healthy family relationships and succeed in many other aspects of life.

“The trucks draw parents and children to the event, and they are happy to learn more about the educational possibilities available in Washtenaw

County,” Long said.

Both public and private sector individuals participated in the event, donating their time and equipment for kids to explore.

“We’re so grateful to them for participating, and giving kids a chance to explore first-hand the vehicles they see driving on their streets every day,” Long said.

For more information about the Washtenaw County Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative, visit: www.washtenawsuccessby6.org or call (734) 994-8100.



Preschoolers tour trucks and buses with safety personnel while parents visit the Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative and learn about school readiness resources.



Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Klone © 2012

The big glass squares we stare out of are way more interesting than the big glass squares people turn on and off.

Those things are really annoying!

We can see nature and life through our glass squares.

Their squares mostly show explosions and large heads.

Sometimes we even get to hear things, like birds and crickets and frogs

Usually their squares just have loud voices, fake laughter and bad music.

And if we're lucky they move our glass square a bit and we get a wonderful variety of aromas as well.

I'm glad I can't smell anything from their glass squares!



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					3	5		
5			8	1			9	4
8							1	2
7	4	8		5				
				4		1	7	3
3	2							6
6	7			3	4			1
		4	9					

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Cryptoquote

"CT UDB GIRZ ZD NISJ XJIBZCTBF NBOCV, UDB NBOZ

HFIU ZQJ XFIVS IRP ZQJ GQCZJ RDZJO ZDKJZQJE."

-ECVQIEP N. RCLDR

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcov-

- er News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

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ACROSS

- Weakens
- Quantity per unit of time
- Fonda
- German seaport
- University of Michigan broadcaster
- Sidestep
- Thought
- Nemesis
- Persist in an auction
- September birthstone
- Famous _____
- Expire
- Late
- Bother
- Also
- Organic acid (abbr.)
- Accumulate
- Spirit
- Period of time
- Undead being
- Lack of innocence
- Place to shop
- _____ of a kind
- Artist's need
- Untrue
- Soil
- Massachusetts school (abbr.)
- Made public
- Italian city
- Have a meal
- Adventures
- April birthstones
- Sports building
- Unit of atmospheric pressure
- Challenge
- Danger
- Pitcher Hersher
- Unlock
- Full
- Finishes
- Amphibian

DOWN

- Footwear of a sort
- Verdi opera
- Chick's sound
- In a sloppy manner
- July birthstones
- Distantly
- Principle

Spring and Summer Birthstones

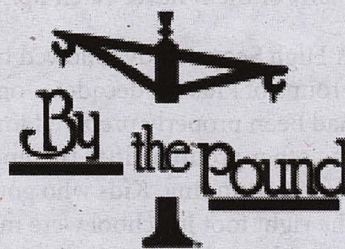
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- Before
- August birthstone
- Each
- Computer keys
- Make corrections
- 1981 Warren Beatty movie
- Snake's sound
- Icy dew
- Island chain
- Angelic auras
- Organic acid
- Sped
- Distributed playing cards
- Pertaining to the Vikings
- Fed the pot
- Enthusiasm
- Go
- Profits

- Prehistoric beast
- May birthstone
- Froth
- June birthstones
- Lamp dweller
- Prettify
- Headwear
- Vicinity
- Impudent
- Became angry
- Neck part
- Barrymore or Carey
- Transmitted
- Foot part

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

Solutions on page 11



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From homelessness in Ann Arbor to the Homeless World Cup in Brazil

by Greg Hoffman,
Groundcover Social Work Intern

Playing on the U.S. national team for the Homeless World Cup left David Altherr with some special memories and a mission. His journey began in Washtenaw County through the Project Outreach Team (PORT) and its street soccer program (SSPORT).

He first heard about the local SSSPORT soccer team nearly three years ago at the PORT offices in Ann Arbor. Before his first practice, David, now in his fifties, had never played organized soccer. He gave it a try after continued encouragement from the SSSPORT coaches. Since then, David says he hasn't missed more than three or four practices.

As a younger man, David was an avid baseball player, and he says that soccer really helped to fill the void created when he stopped playing baseball. Not only has it provided a means of promoting physical health through the exercise of playing, but it has also been a driving force in helping David stay sober and turn his life around. The weekly practices give David something to look forward to each week, and he encourages others to share in the mental and physical benefits that soccer provides.

"There's no pressure. It's a lot of fun. Just come out and join us," David tells them.

To be eligible to travel to tournaments with the SSSPORT team, players must first commit to sobriety for at least thirty days. David's first travel opportunity with the SSSPORT team came in the summer of 2010, when he and the team



The 2010 Homeless World Cup was held at Rio de Janeiro in September.

traveled to Washington, D.C. to compete for the USA Homeless Cup. David says that this first experience felt like being a superstar. Participants in the tournament were outfitted with special tournament clothing, equipment, and new shoes.

Though the SSSPORT team did not win the 2010 Street Soccer USA Cup, the team was awarded the tournament's Fair Play Award for demonstrating sportsmanship and positive attitudes on and off the field. While in D.C., David was interviewed by representatives from Street Soccer USA about what soccer meant to him, but he had little idea at the time that he had been identified as a candidate for the U.S. Men's National team. As the USA Cup came to a close, there was a parade and awards ceremony, which culminated with the selection of the U.S. National Team, and David was chosen to represent

the United States in the 2010 Homeless World Cup in Brazil.

The Homeless World Cup trip began with a three-day stop in New York. While there, David began practicing with the other players who had been selected for the U.S. Team. The highlight in New York was a four-on-four scrimmage with players from Major League Soccer's New York Red Bulls, the professional soccer team in New York.

After New York, the team boarded a plane and headed for Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. 55 teams participated in the 2010 Homeless World Cup; 43 men's teams and 12 women's teams. In all, more than 40 countries were represented. The games were held on the edge of the white sand of Copacabana Beach from September 19th to the 26th. The U.S. Men's team performed admirably,

finishing in 20th place, and the U.S. Women's team earned an 11th place finish.

David recollects two experiences that really stick out from the trip, aside from the action on the field. The first was the breathtaking views from the 100-foot-tall Christ the Redeemer statue that looks out over the city of Rio.

"You're up there in the foggy mists from the mountains, and you can see all the way down to the white sandy beaches," David recalled.

The other experience that had a lasting impression on David was the opportunity to attend an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with other players, including members of the Swedish and Finnish National teams. The meeting was facilitated by translators and when it closed, the participants each said their closing prayers in their native languages.

"It was really a joy to be able to experience something like that," David said.

According to David, once someone is selected to go to the Homeless World Cup, they become an ambassador not only of the U.S. team, but also of the mission and goals of Homeless Soccer efforts worldwide. He lives up to this charge through his daily efforts to share the benefits of soccer with everyone he meets.

"It doesn't matter who wins, because we all win because we are all on the same team. The whole idea is to fight homelessness," David said.

Arts at the homeless shelter

by Anthony Hinkelman, contributor
and Robert Salo, vendor

The Imagine Community gathers every Tuesday at the Robert J. Delonis Shelter from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. It's an eclectic cluster of the homeless, artists, young professionals and anyone else interested in starting off their week among friends.

Tuesdays are open to any combination of instrumental jam sessions, movie showings, or arts and crafts. Whatever is scheduled, it generally results in laughter and friendships. Last Tuesday featured arts and crafts where beads, paint, paper and shirts, awaited to become someone's masterpiece. Some made flashy necklaces. Others designed shirts, usually with an "imagine community" theme.

The events are a result of Imagine's community building efforts, which arose from the Occupy Ann Arbor Movement.

"We believe a community can be created through the experience

of working together and discovering each other's talents," said Orian Zakai, an Imagine Community member. "What we do is empower people to find their talents and do something they like doing, and through that we hope we help people to live."

The events are having an impact. One such participant rediscovered

her talent for jewelry making after attending an event. She's since been selling her work.

True to Imagine's purpose, a community has been created here, where everyone is and

feels welcomed. Many will walk in wearing their stress and tribulations, a result of untold hardships. All of them visibly shed them as

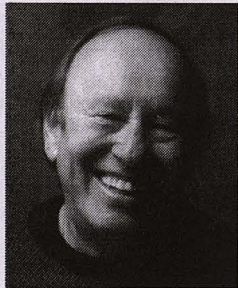
they join this collective fellowship. It's a creative opportunity to feel a part of others' lives, if only for a day.

Clearly, the Tuesday events tap into an unfulfilled need. It only seems to be growing with each passing week.



Hung-up over a hang-up

An Ann Arbor resident's recollections of a disturbing incident and lessons learned



by Martin
Stolzenberg

Groundcover
Contributor

This is a story about a phone call that was never completed. It has continued to haunt me over the years.

We were newly-weds living in a small, inexpensive apartment in Briarwood, Queens, near the Van Wyck Expressway. One night at about 1 a.m., the phone woke me out of a sound sleep. I padded out to the hanging phone in the kitchenette.

"Hello."

An operator-type voice asked, "Is this Martin Stolzenberg?"

"Yeah."

"Will you take a collect person-to-person collect call from Stanley G. in Las Vegas?"

Quick as a cat, I said, "No," and clicked the receiver.

Back in our bedroom, my wife Gale groggily asked, "What is that about?"

"It was a collect call from Stan G. in Vegas. I refused it."

The rest of the night I tossed and turned, but said nothing further to Gale about the call and my reaction or lack of action. He was running through my thoughts.

Stan G. was a boyhood friend who had fallen on hard times. His mother had let it be known through the grapevine that, "Stanley, like his father, has become an addictive gambler. If he calls looking for money, don't give it to him."

That night I followed his mom's advice, but inside I kept thinking, "Why did I do that?" While Stan and I had been tight through high school, we had drifted apart. The call surprised me because it was unexpected and late at night. I didn't know he was even aware of where I lived. It just caught me off-guard.

Growing up, Stan was one of the kids who played basketball in the nearby park. In his early teens, was a nice, just about average player, shifty and clever, an okay shooter, but short and not too fast. He was also a nice kid, friendly and outgoing. We would joke around imitating famous players, taking ridiculous basketball shots and, when not playing ball in the winter, hang out at the local pool room.

Before his junior year in high school, Stan just shot up. He was now stronger and faster, enhancing his other skills. He became one of the best players

around the neighborhood. During his senior high school year, Stan went far beyond a good neighborhood player. He was now an elite All-City player. That was major because New York City was the basketball hot-bed of the country. So he was one of the best. But he was the same Stan, unaffected with a twinkle in his eye and a fast quip. A sweet guy.

Stanley now added a girlfriend, a cute cheerleader/twirler at our high school, Lenore M. He was coveted by a southern university, a top-level NCAA basketball program. After high school graduation Stan was shipped off by that school to an upstate military school for more basketball polishing, before going south.

Unfortunately, there he was a reserve, no longer a star. Things went south, in more ways than geography. He left school under dubious circumstances. Rumors were he and another player were cheating on exams. Rather than go on probation, he left school, married Lenore and transferred to NYU where he also played ball for a year. Then he dropped out of school for good.

Stan had a series of low-level jobs; he just couldn't find a place for himself. He and Lenore had a child, and then split up. After that, I heard nothing, until the aborted phone call.

Why hadn't I taken the call, and maybe sent him fifty bucks or so?

It was easy to convince myself I was complying with his mother's wishes not to enable him. But I knew a part of me also didn't want to part with the money. Gale was still in school. I wasn't making a lot, either. I further rationalized, "If I had to work everyday, in my less than exciting job, why shouldn't he?" And, "If I gave him this money, it might open me up to being hit-up again and again."

So I hadn't taken the call.

But then I thought, "Maybe he wants to get out of there, come home and get his life straightened out, and needs the bus fare." Or, "What if he owes someone money and they are threatening him?" Or, "What if he is not feeling well and needs the money for medicine?"

There were other choices. I could have listened to him or even told the operator to call back in fifteen minutes, and thought it through with Gale. Didn't I owe Stanley that? By refusing the call I had cut off other options. I knew of no way to fix it after my hang-up. I'd cut woff a lifelong friend.

After that night, I took the easy way out, dismissing the call from my thinking. In retrospect, it was just too painful. I was small in my own eyes. I didn't ask about Stanley to my friends, either. I really didn't want to know.

Years later, I learned that he had died young of a coronary, wasted from

gambling, drinking and smoking.

Lately Stanley has often been popping up in my thoughts. Again, had I done the right thing? What had I learned from this "shoulda, coulda, woulda" moment? How had this night impacted my later decision-making?

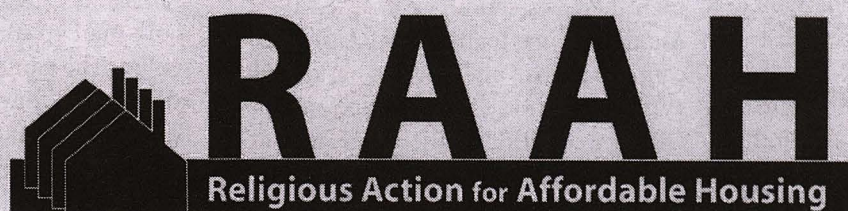
I slowly came to realize I made the wrong decision that long-ago night. You know why? If it was the right decision, it wouldn't have bothered me all these years.

Most of what I have read on decision-making extol the virtues of instant reaction, going with your gut-instinct. But I have come to think that there are times to ask yourself first, "Am I about to do something that could make me feel ashamed, or hurt or have a negative impact on someone else?"

Now I try harder to think twice about "shooting from the hip," making impetuous, snap judgments and decisions. There haven't been any more jarring turn-off incidents in my life after this one. Maybe I learned a lesson from that long ago night.

There is that old adage, "Act in haste, repent at leisure."

For me, it hasn't been leisurely.



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Executive Director of the Ann Arbor Housing Commission

For more information visit RAAH.org

Book review: Heart of a Native

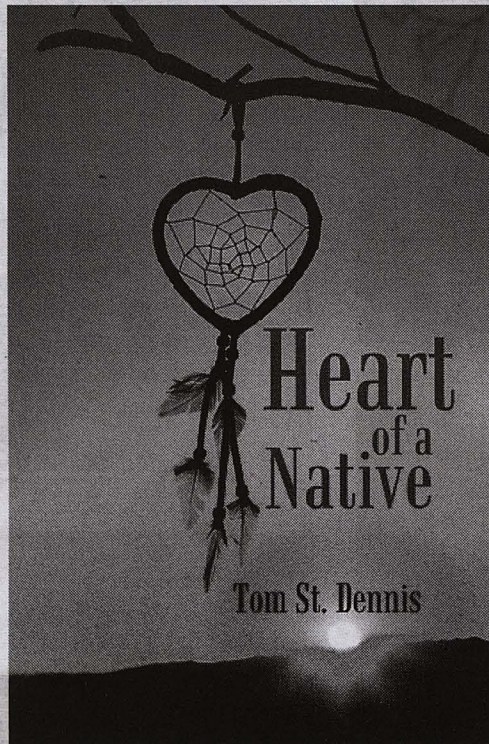
by Tom St. Dennis
c. 2012 by iUniverse / Star Bluff Publishing

by Andrew Nixon
Groundcover Editor

Jack Clay is a middle-aged man who, though Native American (specifically Lakota) by heritage, has been steeped all his adult life in the fast-paced, cutthroat culture of northern Michigan's lakeside real estate industry. The bumper-sticker on his outsized SUV reads, "He Who Dies with the Most Toys Wins!" – and he has mostly bought into this pathos, dutifully trading his life energy for the money, material luxuries, and requisite debt load that have become measures of success in mainstream America. But as a series of personal blows shake up his world, Jack's faith in the path he has taken starts to founder. The doubts that arise have an inescapable momentum, propelling Jack on a journey of self-discovery that will fundamentally alter the course of his life.

Unfolding with lively prose, *Heart of a Native* is Michigan author Tom St. Dennis's first novel, and it admirably conveys the author's concern for the state of the world, and his conviction that – in the post-epiphany words of the protagonist – traditional Native American values "can still bring incredible value to this manic world that has strayed so far from the teachings of the Creator and the rhythms of the natural world."

St. Dennis is clearly hoping that readers will identify with Jack and be inspired by the protagonist's example to undergo a similar spiritual journey. In spite of his foibles – indeed, because of them – Jack is a likeable guy, misguided but well-intentioned. He has a sense of



integrity, even if the aims he has been faithful to – scoring successes for his real estate firm, keeping up with the Joneses – have their limitations and, as Jack comes to see, their many "hidden costs." He works hard and is kind to others. This is why we can care about Jack when his carefully-crafted good life starts to break down, forcing him to face some hard existential questions. With dawning clarity, Jack realizes how "numb, betrayed, and totally alone" he is. He feels intuitively that he can't in good conscience return to his former ways, but he feels both trapped by his circumstances and addicted to the intoxicating effects of high-hog living.

There is some of Jack Clay in all of us, and to one degree or another, we all are on his journey. Like Jack at the novel's opening, so many of us in the modern world feel numb, betrayed, and alone. We sense that there must be something more to life than competing and consuming – but what, and how? Each of us must grapple with this question individually, but there is no denying

that the enormous pressure and dizzying confusion of keeping up with the times is often an overwhelming experience. To paraphrase ecological psychologist Chellis Glendinning, no one grows up in modern society without being traumatized by it.

Jack is fortunate to have his Lakota heritage to turn to for guidance and support through his predicament. His surviving grandfather, Ed – who helped to raise Jack – is a tribal elder and once again takes his wayward grandson under his steady wing, helping Jack to connect the dots between the two cultures he occupies. Under Ed's wise tutelage, Jack is able to reconnect with the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, which relate to the virtues of wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth. When he does, he is able to see a viable way through the "white man's dilemma" of slavery to work and estrangement from community and from Mother Nature.

St. Dennis's voice has clarity, conviction, and, most importantly, compassion – while the reader is unmistakably nudged in the direction of *dismay* over the mess of modernity, care is taken not to encourage downright *disdain* for any individual involved in helping to create and sustain the debacle. Clearly for St. Dennis, we are all in this together; even the most obtuse of characters in the book, a cocky fishing guide named Eric, is drawn in a way that elicits our sympathy.

Heart of a Native is a short, easy read that is appropriate for

young adults and beyond, and is sure to be a source of hopeful inspiration for anyone beginning to question the *status quo* and curious about more spiritually fulfilling and environmentally sustainable alternatives.

Contact your local library or favorite locally-owned bookstore to inquire about obtaining a copy, or visit the official website to order the book online:

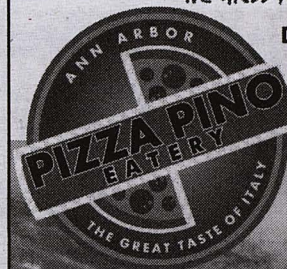
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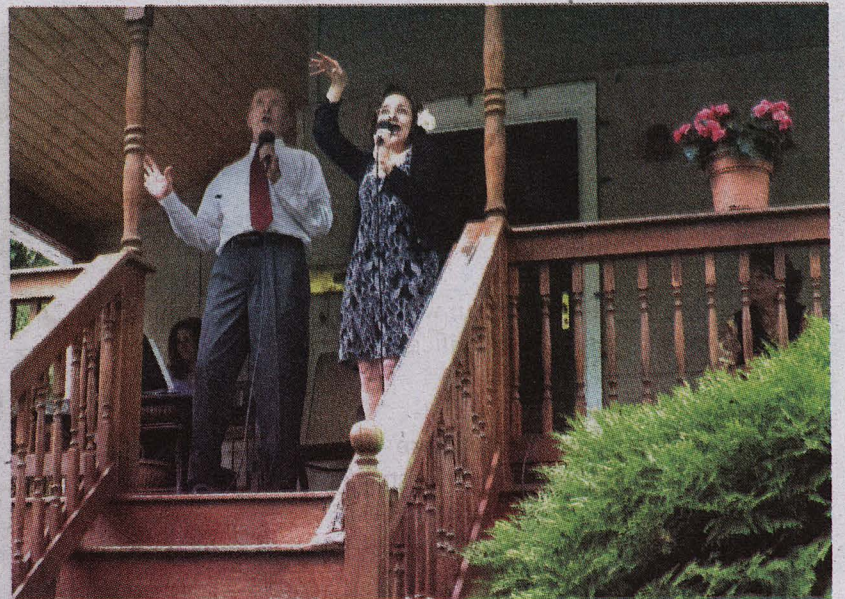
"If you want to make beautiful music,
you must play the black and the white
notes together."

- Richard M. Nixon

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The second annual Water Hill Music Festival



Ann Arbor residents flocked to the Water Hill neighborhood Sunday May 5, to enjoy dozens of area musicians. Building on last year's success, the festival drew hundreds of visitors for a block-party that lasted most of the day. (Counter-clockwise starting below) Rootstand; Dick Siegel and band; Maria Camarelli & Mark Vondrak.

Images by Lee Alexander & Ben Colman



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Front cover image, John Madison and Friends.
by Ben Colman

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